

INTRODUCTION

Since 1947 the Department of Energy and its predecessor agencies have moved nuclear weapons, weapons components, and special nuclear materials (SNM) by commercial and government transportation modes.

In the late 1960's, worldwide terrorism and acts of violence prompted a review of procedures for safeguarding these materials. As a result, a comprehensive new series of regulations and equipment was developed to enhance the safety and security of these materials in transit. The Office of Transportation and Safeguards (OTS) subsequently was established in 1975 at the DOE Albuquerque Operations Office.

OTS modified and redesigned transport equipment to incorporate features that more effectively enhanced self-protection and denied unauthorized access to the materials. During this time OTS curtailed the use of commercial transportation systems and moved to a total federal operation.

In Fiscal Year 2000 Title 32 of the National Defense Authorization Act under Public Law 106-65 established the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) as a semiautonomous agency within the DOE with responsibility for the nation's nuclear weapons, nonproliferation, and naval reactors programs. The Albuquerque Operations Office and its entire mission fell under the direction of the NNSA, which included OTS.



Office of Secure Transportation

In December 2002 NNSA implemented a new organizational structure to consolidate the Albuquerque Operations Office with other NNSA operations offices into the NNSA Service Center located in Albuquerque. OTS was renamed the Office of Secure Transportation (OST) and reports directly to the Deputy Secretary for Defense Programs at NNSA Headquarters in Washington, DC.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

Since its establishment in 1975, OST has accumulated more than 100 million miles of over-the-road experience transporting DOE-owned cargo with no accidents causing a fatality or release of radioactive material. This is due largely to the OST philosophy that safety and security are of equal and paramount importance in the accomplishment of NNSA's transportation safeguards mission.

LAW ENFORCEMENT LIAISON

OST has a liaison program through which it communicates with law enforcement and public safety agencies throughout the country, making them aware of the OST mission. OST has established procedures should an OST vehicle be stopped by an officer.

The liaison program provides law enforcement officers information to assist them in recognizing one of these vehicles should it be involved in an accident, and what actions to take in conjunction with the actions of the federal agents.

Through the liaison program OST offers in-depth mission briefings. If you are interested in a briefing or have any other questions concerning OST's operations, contact the Liaison and Security Affairs Branch at 800-424-0167.

OPERATIONS CENTER

The OST Operations Center is a nationwide communications system operated by OST and located in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This system monitors the status and location and maintains real-time communications 24-hours a day, 365 days a year, with every convoy.

The Operations Center also maintains an emergency contact directory of federal and state response organizations located throughout the contiguous United States.

TRAVEL PRECAUTIONS

OST makes every effort to ensure its convoys do not travel during inclement weather. Should the convoys encounter adverse weather, provisions exist for the convoys to seek secure shelter at previously identified facilities.

Although OST provides sleeper berths in all vehicles, special agents accompanying shipments

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do not exceed 32 hours of continuous travel without being afforded the opportunity for 8 hours of uninterrupted, stationary bed rest.

OST has also imposed a maximum 65-mile-per-hour speed limit on its convoys, even if the posted limit is greater.

FEDERAL AGENTS

Armed federal agents accompany each classified shipment. They operate tractors, escort vehicles, communications, and other convoy equipment.

Federal agents are authorized by the Atomic Energy Act to make warrantless arrests and carry firearms in the performance of their duties. They carry both a photo identification card and a shield certifying their federal status. Federal agents are required to obey all traffic laws and will cooperate fully with law enforcement officers.

After careful screening and selection, federal agent trainees undergo a 20-week basic training course, during which they receive instruction in tractor-trailer driving, communications systems operation, and firearms.

Tests in operating procedures, physical fitness, driving, firearms, and other job-related subjects must be passed in order to complete the training and be certified as a federal agent. Following recruit

training, the federal agent spends the balance of the first year in on-the-job training. The first year of employment is probationary, which the federal agent must successfully complete to be retained.

Federal agents are given in-service training throughout their careers. These classes are designed to refresh and update the training taught during basic training, in addition to preparing agents for demonstrations or armed attacks. Subjects such as team tactics, terrorist tactics, and new adversary technology are taught. In addition, physical and firearm proficiency is tested.

Federal agents must continue to meet periodic qualification requirements relative to firearms, physical fitness, and driving proficiency. They must also undergo and pass an annual examination for continued certification under the DOE Personnel Assurance Program. In addition, federal agents are subject to randomized drug and alcohol testing.

If a federal agent fails to meet any of the minimum requirements necessary for agent certification, the individual is temporarily removed from active status and provided additional training until demonstrated performance reaches an acceptable level.

TRANSPORTATION VEHICLES

The Safeguards Transporter (SGT) is a specially designed part of an 18-wheel rig that incorporates various deterrents to prevent unauthorized removal of cargo. The trailer has been designed to protect the cargo against damage in the event of an accident. This is accomplished through

superior structural characteristics and a highly reliable cargo tie-down system similar to that used aboard aircraft.

The thermal characteristics of the SGT would allow the trailer to be totally engulfed in a fire without incurring damage to the cargo.

The tractors are standard production units that have been modified to provide the federal agents protection against attack. Escort vehicles accompany the tractor-trailers during transportation activities.

These tractors and escort vehicles are equipped with communications, electronic, and other equipment that further enhance en-route safety and security.

The vehicles used by OST must meet maintenance standards significantly more stringent than those for similar commercial transport equipment. All vehicles undergo an extensive maintenance check prior to every trip, as well as periodic preventative maintenance inspections. In addition, these vehicles are replaced more frequently than commercial shippers. As a result, OST experiences few en-route breakdowns and has had no accidents due to equipment malfunction.

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